

MACOMB COUNTY

Marketing Communications Plan

~ Building a Sustainable Brand Identity

Strategic Visioning Task Force

~ Final Report and Recommendations

**Macomb County Planning & Economic Development
April 2006**

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1.0 PLAN SUMMARY

The following pages describe in detail a Marketing Communications Plan (Plan) uniquely designed to establish, launch and manage a positive and sustainable campaign for the brand, Macomb County (County).

A brand is defined as the proprietary visual, emotional and cultural image associated with an organization by its audiences. It is the expectation, the promise to those audiences that an organization's reputation or image is built upon.

The recommended approach, strategy and tactical execution of the branding campaign are the result of four months of extensive field research. Focus group sessions and discussions with key stakeholders in the County were conducted to gain all possible insight into the strengths and opportunities to promote as well as weaknesses and threats to mitigate. In addition, County and non-County residents were interviewed "on the street" to garner their opinion and comment about the County.

Based upon the field research findings, along with specific goals identified by the Macomb County Strategic Visioning Task Force, the Plan lays out a strategic approach that centers around four key attributes, or *Brand Pillars*, of the County. These attributes will be woven throughout all promotional and political messages, forming the foundation of the new brand image for Macomb County. The Brand Pillars are:

- An Enriching Community
- Open to Enterprise
- Active Government Leadership
- Accessible to All

The plan will create awareness, set expectations, and establish the County's brand equity through a methodical, incremental and evolutionary approach to communication and messaging designed to:

- **Build The Buzz** - Create a messaging "theme" which becomes a repetitive word or phrase that embodies the spirit of the brand image Pillars. Begin "planting" the theme in all written and verbal, internal and external communication.
- **Maintain Momentum** - Enhance messaging frequency by weaving the theme into all County communications including speeches, press releases, collateral materials and special events.
- **Launch The Campaign** - When public and media awareness of the theme has reached a significant level (as determined by ongoing monitoring and research), an event will be staged to formally introduce the image campaign to the community and the media. The image campaign's slogan will reinforce the messaging theme and become the culmination or "pay off" to all of the buzz.

This incremental, evolutionary approach is designed to establish believability and a receptive attitude – critical components of successful branding. No campaign succeeds where slogans and catch phrases are prematurely launched without consideration for public perception, awareness or buy-in.

The new brand image will be seen by and delivered to a broad-based audience. This includes specific audiences outside of Macomb County as well as those within its borders. This “external” and “internal” audience breakdown – and further segmentation by business, resident media, etc, - results in a more strategically relevant and controllable message.

But how will we know if we’re successful?

The critical component in gauging the ultimate success of the plan is measurement and benchmarking at pre-determined intervals. The introduction strategy and execution tactics will be measured against specific metrics by using telephone interview surveys. Internal and external audience perspectives on awareness, attitude and acceptance will be monitored throughout the marketing effort. This information will drive the image building tactics and strategy going forward, ultimately revealing the appropriate time to launch a promotional introduction of a revitalized Macomb County.

Public and media relations, outdoor and traditional advertising and special events among other media and promotional tactics will be used, when and where appropriate, in the preparation and execution of the County’s brand image campaign.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Destination: Brand. Macomb County

Perception

Currently, the prevailing perception of Macomb County is one of a predominately white, blue-collar, rust-belt community.

Within the Detroit metropolitan tri-county area, Macomb is one of the less desirable destinations of the three counties.

Oakland County, to the west of Macomb, is one of the country's wealthiest offering the best primary and secondary education, and a selection of 4-year colleges. The County is also home to the Automation Alley consortium and is headquarters to several world corporations, world-class dining, shopping and sports entertainment.

To the south, Wayne County, the home of Detroit, is rich in history, culture, business, entertainment and one of the largest hubs of transportation in the world.

Macomb County is perceived to lack culture, higher educational opportunities and higher-paying careers while its entire eastern border is an international water way.

Perception is reality.

Perception distinguishes a destination from other destinations, defines it for current and potential residents, businesses, employees and tourists.

How a destination is perceived can affect everything from economic development, educational and cultural enrichment and local pride.

A brand is constructed of perceptions.

A destination brand is an evoked perception related to a geographical location rather than a product, business or organization. It is what people *feel* when they arrive at the destination's point-of-entry, website or experience other communication. It is also their level of expectation when they select one place over another.

Reality

Currently, the fact is that the population in Macomb County is growing and becoming more diverse, older, more affluent and better educated. More people are moving from Oakland and Wayne Counties to Macomb County to take jobs, establish businesses and raise families. The County is also more ethnically and culturally diverse than reported in the media.

At the same time, Macomb County may be losing economic opportunities to near-by counties because it is perceived to lack the resources, culture and “buzz” that others are better known for. Other counties, such as Oakland and Wayne have done a good job of communicating their strengths. Oakland has Automation Alley to showcase its technical talent and Detroit has its influx of new venues for sports, culture and entertainment.

Furthermore, Macomb County is in transition moving from a production economy to a knowledge economy. While manufacturing is still a critical component of the economic structure, it's the addition of a “new economy” emphasis that will keep the community vital.

In short, Macomb County must narrow the gap with other counties - by increasing its college graduation rates, as an example – in an effort to strengthen its workforce in preparation for a knowledge economy. As the workforce ages and the Baby Boomers retire, it will be vitally important to communicate the high quality of life and desirable job opportunities that are offered by Macomb.

Perception VS Reality

The challenge for Macomb County is to change a prevailing set of perceptions in order to showcase a brighter reality.

The goal for Macomb County is to enhance its image, encourage new investment, maintain a high quality of life and create and maintain desirable job opportunities.

Gyro has engaged with Macomb County to develop strategies to reach the goal and have outlined short-term and long-term objectives and tactics to support it.

3.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS

The past four months were spent conducting focus group sessions with key audience segments to obtain the information needed to assemble an appropriate brand identity.

In a series of discussions, audience segment participants candidly voiced their own perspectives of County strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This information was cross-referenced between audience segments, prioritized according to frequency of response, and brought before representatives from each segment to confirm all opinions in a brand building session.

At this final session, suggested Brand Pillars derived from the focus group feedback were introduced for discussion and validation. These Pillars are in direct alignment with the four priorities as originally suggested by the Macomb County Strategic Visioning Task Force (Image Enhancement; Quality of Life; New Investment; Job Opportunities) in its December 2003 report to the County.

It is important to note that, while the Brand Pillars align with these priorities, they were not influenced by them and were created solely from the focus group findings. It was only after the Pillars were developed and agreed upon by our focus group participants that we cross-referenced them with the priorities to validate the accuracy of the Task Force recommendations vis-à-vis the opinions of the focus group participants.

The fact that these are in direct alignment validates the efforts of both the Task Force and the focus group participants. It also ensures that the ensuing branding campaign will directly support County priorities and is based on unique, inherent County attributes.

3.1 Brand Pillars and Descriptors of Macomb County

“Enriching Community” is the brand pillar that came out of the County’s desire to enhance its image. The County wants to focus on its strong school system and abundance of natural resources and recreational activities. Plus, the community is more ethnically and culturally diverse than what is reported in the media.

New investment for economic development is the key to the **“Open to Enterprise”** brand pillar. The County has a very skilled, technically competent manufacturing/automotive workforce. The County is also the hub of the automotive supply distribution center for both U.S. and Canadian shipping points.

In order to create and maintain desirable job opportunities, the County needs to aggressively promote its **“Active Government Leadership”** the third brand pillar. The County fosters strong partnerships with education, corporate and government entities to encourage its workforce to remain in Macomb for their job opportunities.

“Accessible to All” is the fourth brand pillar that addresses the high quality of life for Macomb County residents. There is a good cultural and racial mix of people that have affordable housing opportunities from high-end to reasonably priced. In fact, Macomb is the fastest growing County in Michigan.

4.0 PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of this Plan is to outline the implementation of a marketing and communications campaign that articulates the objectives, messages, audiences and delivery mechanisms of a revitalized identity for Macomb County.

The Plan supports the following pre-established goals of Macomb County:

- Enhance Macomb's overall image
- Encourage new investment
- Maintain a high quality of life
- Create and maintain desirable job opportunities

The following Objectives support our stated Purpose and the Goals of the County.

- Create a sustainable, re-energized image/identity for Macomb County
- Involve all pre-established priorities and goals of the County in the design of the new identity and image
- Utilize all available means of communication to convey strategic messaging
- Establish a means of auditing success by establishing qualitative measurement metrics at pre-determined intervals
- Provide the County with ongoing, tangible results of the strategic positioning and implementation effort of the new County image

5.0 STRATEGY

A strong brand image is not an immediate achievement, nor is it defined by a slogan or a catch phrase. Successful brand identities are a result of continuous strategic communication, and creating distinction and differentiation in the minds of the target market: In this case, the residents and businesses in and around Macomb County.

Through our field research we have identified four distinguishable attributes of Macomb County, which we have referred to as Pillars. These four Pillars will become the foundation upon which the County's new "brand image" will be built.

- An enriching community
- Open to enterprise
- Active government leadership
- Accessible to all

These four Pillars are Macomb County's "*brand promises*" and will be reinforced throughout all County communication.

It is important to note that every time a promise is broken the County's brand image will deteriorate. Therefore, the County's brand promises will become the "litmus test" for all image initiatives going forward.

5.1 Image Introduction Strategy - An Evolutionary Approach

The creation, positioning and ultimate implementation of the County's brand image will result from a dedicated and pragmatic communication effort consisting of three phases. Our Success Audit Metrics, outlined in the Metrics section of this proposal, will determine the timeframe of each phase and reveal the need for course correction along the way.

A. Awareness

The first phase of our approach is to develop awareness of the County's Brand Pillars (promises) by establishing a consistent and cohesive theme strategically yet quietly injected into all written and verbal messaging and communication coming from the County.

The theme will not be used as a slogan. Instead, the theme will act as a consistently reoccurring message in all media contacts, speeches, press releases, internal and external memorandums, etc. The proposed theme will be:

Celebrate Macomb

"Celebrate Macomb" will resonate with both county and out-of-county residents and businesses. When used in the appropriate context, it will positively relate to all, geographic and cultural diversity, economic, social and political differences as well as act as a metaphor for the excitement of the county's emerging growth and promising future. "Celebrate Macomb's" thematic translations are limitless.

Macomb County
Celebrates Opportunity

Macomb County
Celebrates Enterprise

Macomb County
Celebrates Community

Macomb County
Celebrates Diversity

Macomb County
Celebrates Education

Macomb County
Celebrates Family

B. Identity

The second phase of the Image Introduction Strategy is the ongoing reinforcement and repetitive use of the "Celebrate Macomb" theme in all communication that emanates from the County. This will establish momentum. The press will begin to preface their questions with "what's Macomb celebrating now?" The community in, and outside Macomb County will recognize the distinctive differences that continue to be "celebrated" within the communities of Macomb County.

The strategic use of themed messaging will provide the foundation for the formal launch of the Macomb County marketing, advertising and promotional image and identity campaign.

C. Equity

After we first establish awareness of distinctive differences, and our audience recognizes and identifies these differences as uniquely Macomb, we will introduce to the public, the branding campaign and tagline/slogan that will concisely capture the essence of Macomb County's image.

Once again we will consult the qualitative factors in our Success Audit Metric research to determine the most accurate focus of our creative strategy and slogan development/launch.

5.2 Image Communication Strategy - A Targeted Approach

Audience segments that will receive the County's image communication have been identified as internal or external audiences.

It is important to draw these distinctions to help prioritize and focus our creative execution and messaging effort. In other words, by simply dividing our audience into internal and external segments and then categorizing the segments with descriptors like business, education, residential etc, we can articulate the image messages with greater relevance.

As an example, a message to County residents promoting cultural interests and strong schools (An Enriching Community) will look and sound much different than a message to out of County businesses that highlights the benefits of new investment (Open to Enterprise).

Specific internal and external audience segments as defined by our initial focus sessions are as follows:

Internal- Targets within Macomb County

- Business
- Macomb County Res. Commty.
- Real Estate
- Faith-based
- City/Township Government
- Education
- Non-profit
- Media*

External- Out of County targets

- New Business-Relocation
- Neighboring Communities
- Ethnic/Racial Constituencies
- State, Federal Governments
- Military (Selfridge Air National Guard)
- Tourism
- Recreation
- Resident Relocation
- Media*

The mediums that will deliver the messages to all audience segments are described in detail in the Tactics Section of the Plan.

**NOTE: Print, broadcast and electronic media – while a target audience segment in itself – also represents the medium for communicating County key message descriptors to all other audience segments. As such, the media will be a primary means of establishing third-party credibility for the Macomb County brand.*

5.3 Brand-Value Committee

To realize positive change, it is very important that everyone involved in Macomb County government begin to speak, think and act from a “brand image” perspective. All key County representatives must conduct their business in a way that is consistent with the County’s new image and supportive of the County’s brand promises.

To help monitor the “making and keeping” of Macomb County’s brand promises, a Brand-Values Committee will be established. The responsibility of this Committee is to act as “advocates” of Macomb County’s brand image. The Brand Value Committee will work with County government, business and the private sector to insure the County’s image is clearly, consistently and accurately conveyed. Selected members from the final key messaging session can comprise the bulk of Committee membership in order to sustain momentum generated from focus group participation and generate added political capital with key constituencies

An example of the Brand-Value Committee at work

The Selfridge Air Show represents an ideal opportunity for the Committee to assist by disseminating key messages and influencing overall brand support. Communicating the relevance of the Air Show with respect to the County’s image (positive regional exposure), quality of life (family-oriented event) and economic development (economic impact on Macomb County) will directly support three of our four brand pillars. The Committee can play a role in ensuring these messages are strategically communicated to key internal and external audience segments.

Additionally, the positive political capital generated by a committee of this nature would be invaluable in the County’s efforts to foster additional public/private partnerships.

6.0 TACTICS

The following describes tactics that would support the strategy for building a strong brand image for Macomb County:

6.1 Public and Media Relations

Familiarizing the media about the exciting Planning & Economic Development group's activities at Macomb County is a crucial part of establishing the County's image before businesses, prospects, residents and employees. The media will play an important role in building third-party credibility for Macomb County and legitimizing the brand in the hearts and minds of all audience segments.

Gyro will work closely with members of the media to ensure a good working relationship with the County and the Planning & Economic Development team. To achieve County goals with the editorial community, Gyro and Macomb County will:

- **Establish communications team** comprised of selected County and Gyro representatives to meet on a monthly basis and spearhead all initiatives for Planning & Economic Development. The team will have effective authority for all strategies, tactics, and protocol for the duration of the campaign.
- **Conduct ongoing news audits.** The audits comprise a series of management interviews to help determine all that is newsworthy about Macomb County, its quality of life, services, job opportunities, etc.
- **Develop and issue a media policy** that governs who speaks on behalf of the County on various economic development issues, what is said, and under what circumstances.
- **Develop a crisis communication plan** and media protocol to effectively manage Macomb County's interests during an unforeseen crisis.
- **Develop supporting communications tools (collateral).** Producing all supporting materials with a consistent look will help to reinforce our identity and connect the efforts, messages and services we are communicating to Macomb County.
- **Conduct media training** for Macomb County leadership to increase their level of comfort and control when being interviewed by editors. The one-half to full-day training sessions cover media "do's and don'ts" as well as "live" interview situations that are videotaped and critiqued.
- **Produce an editorial calendar** that identifies appropriate opportunities for Macomb County to be featured in general business and trade publications, including national publications (e.g., Crain's, site selection magazines, Inc.). The calendar will indicate when editors are planning to cover subjects that warrant

inclusion of Macomb County messages. Calendar opportunities will supplement ongoing solicitation efforts to provide timely coverage of County activities.

- **Develop and prepare media tip sheet** for line-of-business publications. This tip sheet will facilitate development of articles and inclusion of Macomb County in industry pieces, round-up stories, etc. It will contain story ideas, interview opportunities and snippets of recent publicity. It will be mailed on a regular basis to the media. Tip sheet development will be supported by information gathered during the news audit.
- **Conduct annual editorial meetings** with one key publication at a time. These meetings give editors access to the County in a controlled environment. The goal is to help editors prepare better stories and make designated Macomb County spokespersons an integral part of the inner circle of contacts.
- **Arrange interviews** for designated Macomb County spokespersons with various publications.
- **Develop and place by-lined articles** by Macomb County in business publications as appropriate.
- **Develop and place executive profiles** in appropriate trade publications to help present Macomb County leadership and build confidence among the business and resident community.
- **Distribute news releases** when appropriate that celebrate County “victories” in job creation, economic investment, public/private partnerships, and overall quality of life issues.
- **Develop speaking engagement opportunities** for the Planning & Economic Development leadership team to reach out to community and business organizations.
- **Manage ongoing publicity** to ensure that Macomb County messages are consistently and clearly played before important constituents. Publicity will be managed on two fronts:
 - **Soft news.** Keeping Macomb County Planning & Economic Development group before the media. This consists of general news with respect to the brand pillars.
 - **Hard news.** Breaking news about the County, new issues/initiatives/partnerships/services as they relate to economic development issues.

The need for the development of communications tools will be identified as each public relations and media event are planned and scheduled.

- **Media Kit:** A media kit is an important communications tool and should be developed to support initial and subsequent PR and media efforts. The kit is for use

by editors and writers. It will contain Media information would include (but is not limited to):

- County fact sheet
- County brochure
- Commissioner listing
- Board Chair bio w/picture
- Department contact sheets
- "Positioning" news releases

6.2 Advertising

Advertising will be essential to reaching those audiences that cannot be reached through editorial or public relations efforts. Advertising activities will heighten awareness, build expectation, perpetuate equity and introduce any new services Macomb County will offer.

- **General line-of-business publications** that can carry messages across market boundaries. A complete recommendation will be developed given additional information about Macomb County's strategic imperatives. A conservative advertising program might consist of print advertising in two or three publications.
- **Directory advertising, buying guides, ad-paks, yearbooks and special editorial issues** of trade publications can support and complement Macomb County's trade advertising efforts. We will work with Macomb County to manage an effective directory program that includes free listings in trade magazines and directories.
- **Airport concourse advertising** can help you reach visitors to the Detroit area. Advertising could convey compelling messages to intrigue travelers and real estate developers to visit Macomb County.
- **Radio advertising** can be an effective way to reach the business community in the Detroit area. Programs with WWJ and WJR will be considered.
- **Outdoor advertising** available on standard billboards or in conjunction with major events can help you reach target audiences with the brand identity program elements.

As with all tactical efforts, a unified look-and-feel will continue to reinforce the identity of Macomb County. A distinct design style of advertising will help its audiences connect the messages to Macomb County. Over time, awareness and recognition will ensue.

6.3 Event Marketing

Gyro would conduct an audit of all local, regional and national events that the Planning & Economic Development group participates in to look for speaking, sponsorship, and exhibit opportunities in order to leverage the new brand.

Current County participation opportunities to evaluate include:

- The Detroit Regional Chamber Mackinac Island Conference
- MPBA Small Business Events
- Automation Alley
- SEMCOG
- Michigan Minority Business Development Council

Concurrently, we will assess all current display graphics and supporting materials the County uses at such events to ensure a consistent and uniform look and message. As with public relations and media, advertising and the development of other communications tools, the goal is to develop a cohesive graphic design system that clearly identifies all communications as Macomb County's.

Specific Gyro event marketing tactics will include:

- **Provide overall evaluation** of previous County event opportunities based on target audience impact.
- **Develop event participation strategy** based on specific sponsorship, exhibit, and speaking opportunities that provide ability to support brand pillars and disseminate appropriate messages.
- **Broker optimum participation levels** (exhibit, sponsorship, speaking opportunities) at each event with respect to target audience impact potential.
- **Promote County participation** via event-specific public relations campaign commensurate with opportunities afforded by each event.
- **Facilitate all arrangements** for exhibit, sponsorship and speaking opportunities at each event.
- **Conduct debrief meetings** after each event to identify challenges/opportunities and review strategies going forward.
- **Evaluate new event opportunities** based on established event participation criteria going forward.

6.4 Sales Support

As with sales efforts for any entity, supporting materials help to communicate the advantages and benefits of what is being sold as well as the services and professionalism the potential customer should expect. In order to help stimulate economic development, Macomb County Planning and Economic Development associates must have the communications tools they need to distinguish the County from other locations considered by prospective business owners, residents and educational institutions.

Gyro will work with Macomb County to understand all initiatives the Department of Planning and Economic Development will be engaged in over the next year. This team will also complete an audit of all communications materials used to supplement past and current efforts as well as determine the need for additional materials support.

Macomb County
Strategic Visioning Task Force

**FINAL REPORT
AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

December 10, 2003

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I. INTRODUCTION

Macomb County is changing. Its population is growing rapidly, up more than 10 percent since 1990, and it is becoming more diverse, older, more affluent and better educated. New construction of homes, shopping centers, schools and roads in the northern part of the county is accompanied by gradual deterioration of the economy and infrastructure in the southern part. Traffic congestion is increasing, as are challenges to the environment, particularly water quality. Manufacturing remains the County's principal source of employment. Yet the proportion of workers engaged in this industry, now 25 percent is shrinking as the proportion of lesser paying jobs in the service sector continues to grow. Keeping and expanding the number of well-paying jobs to support Macomb's economy and tax base is an immediate challenge in the face of pending retirements of the huge Baby Boom generation. These expected massive retirements are likely to result in a labor shortage, and the need to prepare, retain and attract well-educated workers to the County, while expanding social and health services for seniors.

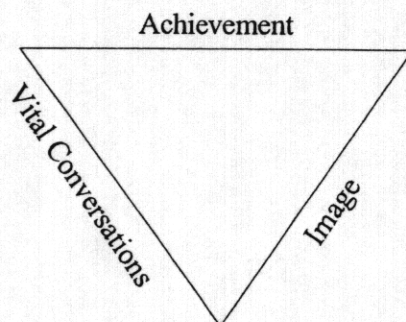
To help the County's citizens and leaders understand and effectively address these profound challenges, Commissioner Nancy White formed the Strategic Visioning Task Force consisting of 28 leaders from Macomb's business, educational and governmental communities. Dr. Al Lorenzo, President of Macomb Community College, chaired the Task Force, which was formed in May 2003. The Task Force formally concludes its work with this Final Report in December 2003.

This report describes what the Task Force accomplished and learned from its efforts, and it proposes a framework for institutionalizing strategic discussions and planning on a countywide basis. The report draws on four key documents that are included in the Appendix: a paper on the "Characteristics of Vibrant Communities" that was prepared by Dr. Barry Stern; the Task Force Member Survey; Presentation of the Results of the Survey; and the recommendation of a Task Force subcommittee chaired by John A. Nitz to continue the Task Force as an advisory body to the Chair of the Board of Commissioners. A roster of Task Force members is also attached.

II. LESSONS LEARNED AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The original mission of the Strategic Visioning Task Force was to develop a promotional strategy for Macomb County that would enhance its image, encourage new investment, maintain a high quality of life, and create and maintain desirable job opportunities. While the Task Force started out looking for ways to enhance Macomb's image, members soon came to realize that image was as much a result of real achievement as clever public relations. Moreover, they realized that vital conversations among multiple stakeholders are pre-conditions to governmental decisions that actually improve the economy and quality of life. In sum, the Task Force learned that achievement, image, and vital conversations enhance one another when they occur concurrently and continually (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Synergies for Community Improvement



An example of the importance of vital conversations occurred when several members of the Task Force expressed concern that hundreds of skilled, well-paying jobs might be lost if the Department of Defense were to close either the Selfridge Air National Guard Base or the TACOM facilities in Warren. Following discussions of this issue at several of its monthly meetings, the Task Force arranged to have a team of individuals from several agencies develop an action plan to save these facilities. One member of the team is a retired 4-star general who had worked in the Pentagon. Task Force discussions also prompted the Board of Commissioners to appropriate \$50,000 to assist the County in making the case to preserve these facilities. Although a work in progress, the Task Force clearly felt that raising the visibility of this issue was one of its major accomplishments, as was having these vital conversations in the first place (see Figures 2 and 3).¹

Along with defending these current assets, Task Force discussions raised awareness of the possibility of locating at Selfridge the proposed regional headquarters for the year old Department of Homeland Security. Indeed, the Task Force counts this raising awareness as another of its accomplishments (see Figure 4). As the Task Force began to flag this issue, the Board of Commissioners and Macomb Community College co-hosted a Homeland Security reception at the annual Selfridge air show in July. Several state and local officials attended, including the Governor and the Executives of Oakland and Wayne Counties. Macomb Community College provided the location for the reception and designed and distributed a brochure with reasons for locating the regional office at Selfridge. With Congress-woman Candice Miller at the forefront of pertinent federal discussions, the County and its partners stand ready to assist in whatever ways it can to

¹ A survey was conducted in October 2003 to determine how Task Force members perceived their accomplishments, the priority issues to be put before the Board of Commissioners, and ways to institutionalize strategic planning in the County. Three-fourths (21 of 28) of the members responded to the survey (see Appendix for both the Survey and the Presentation of Results).

bring this facility to Selfridge. Since the Department of Homeland Security is about ready to release its requirements for the regional office, activity in this area is likely to increase over the next several months.

Figure 2.

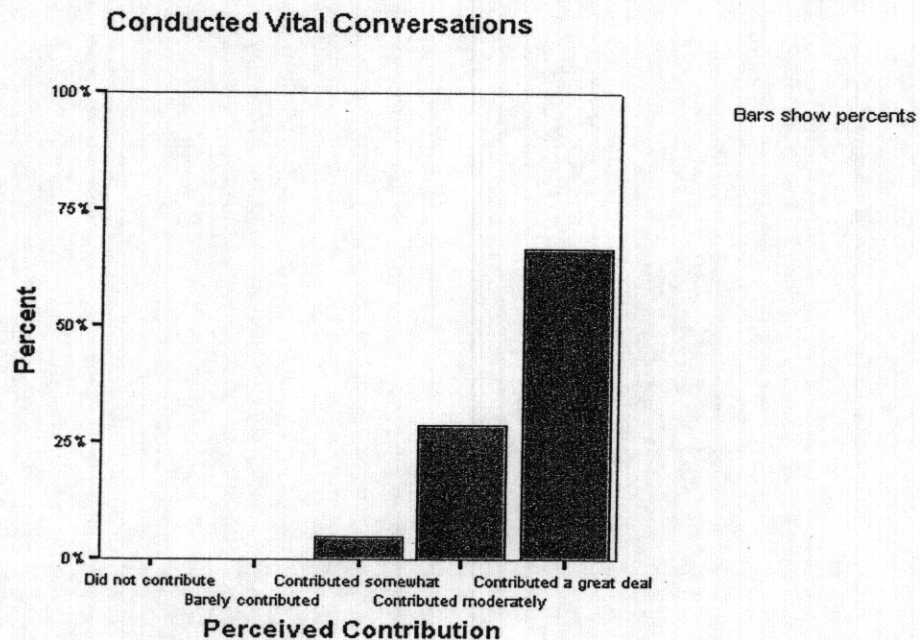


Figure 3.

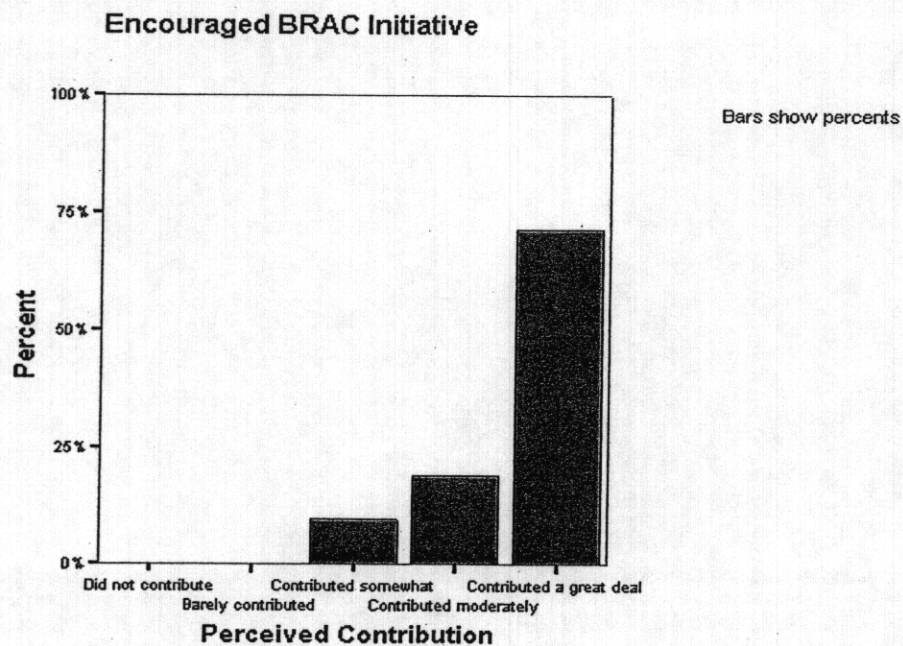
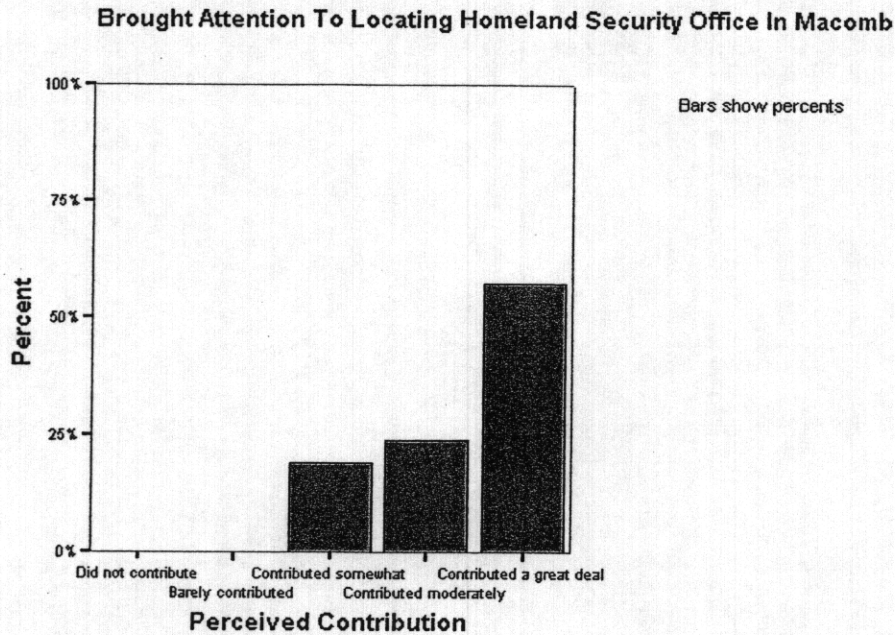
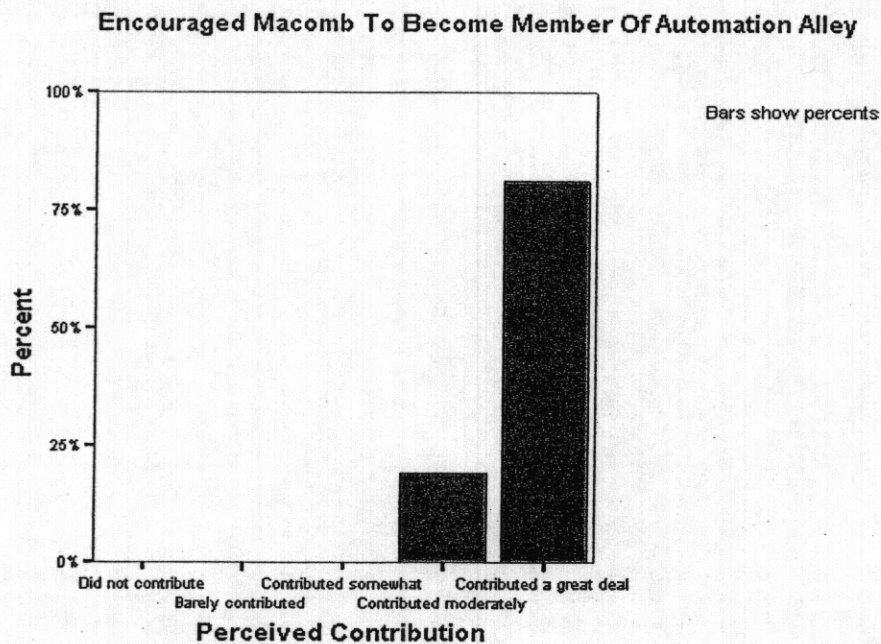


Figure 4.



Another result of Task Force discussions was to encourage the Board of Commissioners to make Macomb County a member of Automation Alley that is headquartered in Oakland County. This desire to participate in regional organizations and issues is also seen as one of the Task Force's major accomplishments (see Figure 5).

Figure 5.



In addition to these specific accomplishments, Task Force members felt to a moderate degree that they had helped raise awareness of, and focused governmental attention on, the County's social and economic conditions, its assets, and the need for a positive image of the County (see Member Survey Results in Appendix).

III. Priority Issues for County Leadership

Developing public-private partnerships to support economic development, improving infrastructure and developing a master plan for land use are the top three concerns that the Task Force believes the Board of Commissioners should address over the next several months (see Figure 6). Recent large and likely permanent job losses in manufacturing no doubt have heightened concern about the Macomb economy. Competing interests along with general satisfaction among Macomb residents with their current quality of life fuels uncertainty as to how best to accommodate Macomb's rapid population growth through better transportation, sanitation facilities and other infrastructure.

Figure 6. Top 5 Concerns Board of Commissioners Should Address

Issue	Frequency of Rank					No. Who Included Item in Top 5
	1	2	3	4	5	
Infrastructure	6	2	2	5	2	17
Private-public partnerships to promote economic dev't	7	3	1	5	1	17
Master plan for land use	1	3	6	0	2	12
County performance	1	2	4	1	1	9
Creative class/livable cities	2	0	2	2	2	8
Plan for environment	2	2	1	0	3	8
Governance structure	0	3	1	2	2	8
Diversity	0	1	0	1	1	3
Overcrowding Justice Sys.	0	1	0	0	0	1
Image of Macomb	0	0	0	0	1	1
School district cooperation	0	0	0	0	1	1
Arts/cultural awareness	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health care access	0	0	0	0	0	0

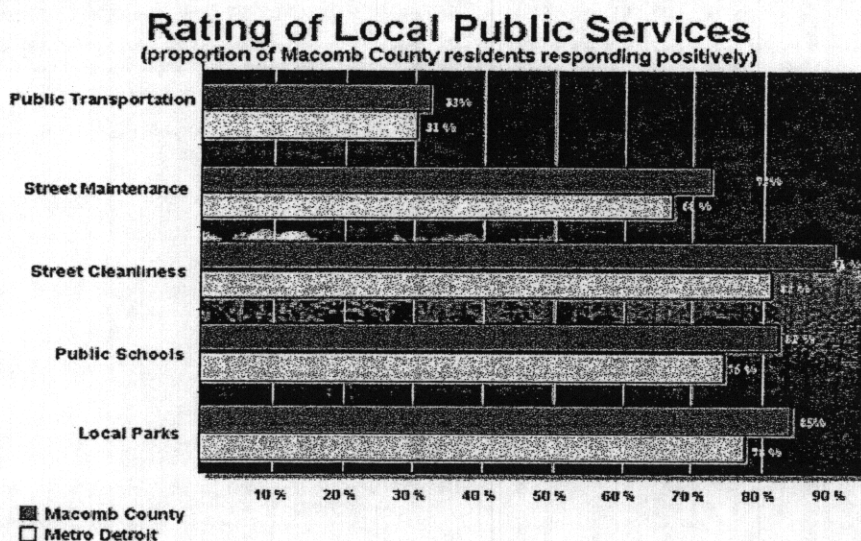
N = 21

These Task Force priorities generally corroborate the conclusions of two recent studies conducted among Macomb residents: (1) the Leadership Macomb *Legacy Report*, which identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Macomb community and suggested courses of action for community improvement; and (2) the *Detroit Area Study* conducted by the University of Michigan in 2001 that provides a comprehensive view of how

residents in the region perceive their quality of life.² Of the 4,077 study participants in the six county region, 956 residents were from Macomb County.

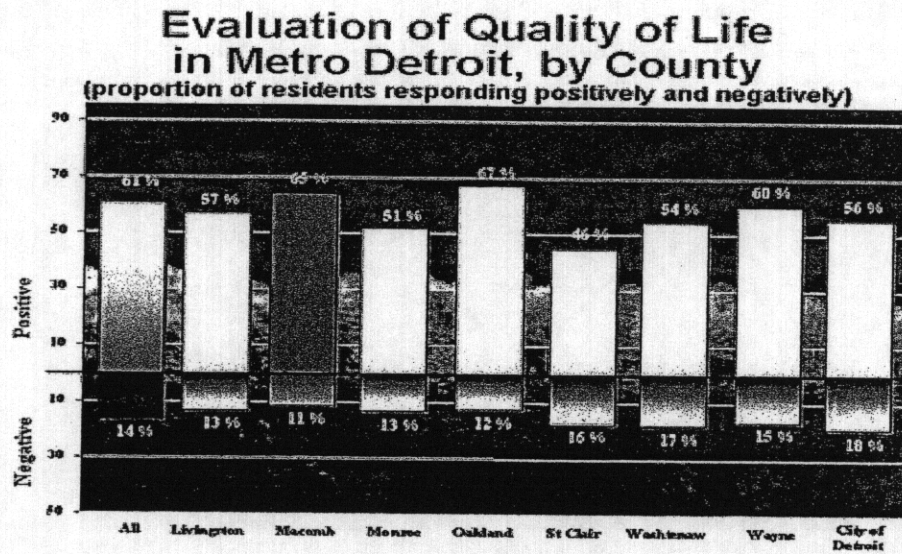
The 2001 University of Michigan study concluded that along with Oakland County and compared to other counties in the region, Macomb residents feel better about their quality of life, communities, neighborhoods, streets, parks, and schools than residents of other counties in the region (for example, see Figures 6 and 7). However, most Macomb residents report serious environmental problems in their county, particularly waste discharge into rivers, lakes and streams. And nearly half of the respondents said that if given the choice, they would move from their present address, a third saying they would probably move within two years.

Figure 7.



² "A Progress Report On The Quality Of Community Life In Macomb County To The Planning And Economic Development Committee, Macomb County Board Of Commissioners, Mt. Clemens Michigan, October 2, 2002.

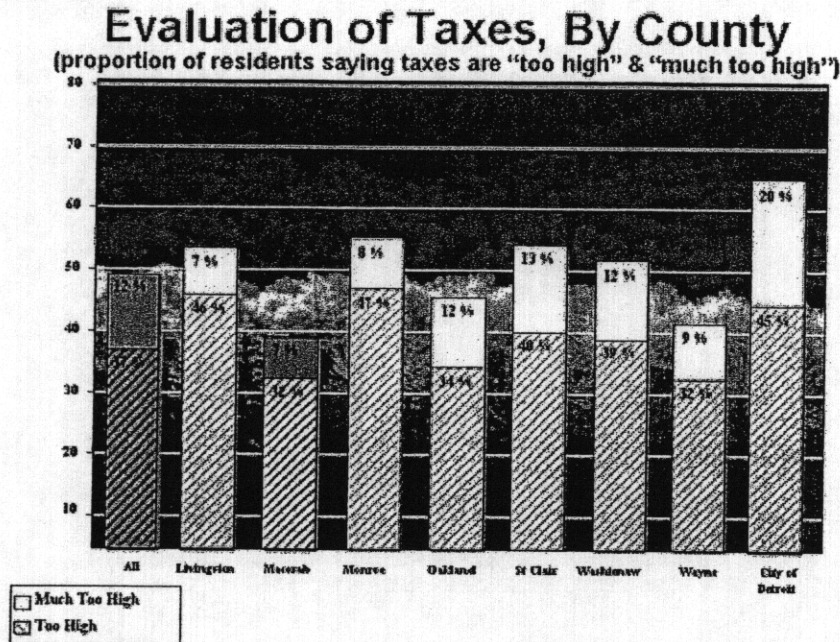
Figure 8.



Other conclusions of the *Detroit Area Study* include the following:

1. **Managing growth.** While Macomb residents are somewhat more likely than others in metro Detroit to say they are satisfied with the job being done by local government, only 30 percent feel local government is doing a good job in managing growth and development. The least content are residents in the large townships. More than half of the Macomb respondents say that state government should play an active role in restricting uncontrolled urban growth.
2. **Taxes.** Compared to others in metro Detroit, Macomb residents are least likely to indicate their taxes are high (see Figure 8). Yet they are more likely than residents of other counties in the region to be willing to increase their taxes for farmland preservation and acquisition of land for parks.
3. **Public Transportation.** Public transit use among Macomb County residents is among the lowest in the region, and they are less likely than others to support an improved and expanded transit system. Yet, a majority believes that public transit is reliable and safe and is important to the quality of life of metro Detroit residents. Another survey, Macomb Community College's 37th Annual Community Opinion Survey conducted in 2002, showed that county residents identified "traffic congestion" as the county's Number One problem.

Figure 9.



Unlike other surveys, the poll the Task Force conducted of its members not only identified priority issues but also ranked them in order of importance. Such ranking is intended to help policy-makers focus their attention what members feel are the most important issues – (1) economic development through public-private partnerships, (2) improving infrastructure such as roads, water, sewers, and telecommunications, and (3) land use policies to balance explosive growth in northern Macomb County with declining industrial use of land in southern Macomb County.

IV. TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

In focusing on these issues the Task Force learned that at the center of almost every successful community development initiative is a high quality, highly visible and highly respected public/private partnership actively involved and deeply committed to improving the economic vitality and overall quality of life within that community. The partnership typically consists of a large, yet manageable number of highly placed representatives from the business, labor, education, non-profit, and government sectors that have the ability to speak for and commit their organizations. This group performs a variety of functions, most commonly including reviewing factual information, shaping the vision, garnering resources, providing information to the public, tracking outcomes, and assessing results. The partnership requires some form of staff support, but also draws heavily upon the resources of other member and community organizations.

The Task Force views itself as being an early iteration of this vision. **It recommends that it continue for now as an advisory body to the Chair of the Board of Commissioners with the same mission as when it started in May 2003:**

To develop a promotional strategy for Macomb County that enhances its image, encourages new investment, maintains a high quality of life, and creates and maintains desirable job opportunities.

In order for the Task Force's continuance to be of optimal benefit to County residents, the Task Force further recommends the following:

1. **Transitional Plan.** The Chair should appoint a 5 to 7 member transition committee to draft an organizational plan to formalize the governance structure, objectives, timelines and operations of the Task Force.
2. **Support by Department of Planning and Economic Development.** The Board of Commissioners should authorize the County Department of Planning and Economic Development to participate with and assist the continuing group in support of the economic and strategic development of the County.
3. **Strategic Development Capacity of County.** The Board of Commissioners should enhance the strategic development capacity of County Government in order to develop strategic and operational plans that would orient all County departments toward, and hold them accountable for achieving, common Countywide goals and objectives approved by the Board.
4. **Collaborative Partnerships.** The Board of Commissioners should resolve to encourage existing business, educational, and social service agencies to collaborate with one another and with the Strategic Visioning Task Force to improve the County's economy and quality of life. Such agencies include, but are not limited to, the Chambers and other business organizations, Macomb Community College, local and County school districts, Leadership Macomb, unions, trade associations, service organizations, social and health service agencies, and community-based organizations.